

Town of North Kingstown, Rhode Island



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PRESS RELEASE

RANSOMWARE ATTACK CONTAINED

North Kingstown, RI — At 4:00 am on Saturday, April 22, the Town of North Kingstown's IT Department learned it was the target of a ransomware attack. By 6:00 am, and in accordance with the Cyber Security Policy maintained by the department, staff had alerted several collaborating and oversight agencies and individuals to include Town Manager A. Ralph Mollis, Rhode Island State Police, Multi-State Information Sharing Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), and RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust (RI Trust). By 11:00 am, the threat was contained.

Quick work to maintain the security of our cloud-based data and software was critical to the mitigation of our losses, but disruptions to the dispatch services of both the Fire and Police Departments were experienced. The IT Department continues to work around the clock to ensure a return to full operations. While the cyber attack will ultimately bear some cost to the town in the form of license and software upgrades and select unit replacements, had preventative measures not been in place, the effects would have been crippling. Systems and flags to address cyber vulnerabilities and malicious enterprises worked as designed. We will be embarking on a forensic audit of our infrastructure and are not aware of user data or personal information being compromised at this time.

Our enterprise resource planning solution software which integrates payment processing, human resources, purchasing, fixed assets, and revenue streams was temporarily suspended out of an abundance of caution. The suspension of this system, known as MUNIS, allowed us to complete planned system upgrades a few days ahead of schedule; unfortunately, it did lead to an interruption in services available at our municipal offices, including only being able to issue hand-written receipts for things like dog licenses and staff did not have the ability to look up user accounts for taxes, sewer bills, and such. The MUNIS upgrade is now complete. Residents will experience a host of new features, including the ability to pay multiple bills in a single transaction and easy access to their account's transaction history.

Following the ransomware attack we experienced, the Town of North Kingstown now has real-world experience with a significant attack on our cyber infrastructure and has learned the security measures we had in place worked as intended. The Town last invested in an external

cyber security audit with Stealth-ISS in 2021, which resulted in the recommended security measures being implemented. The Town of North Kingstown will continue to maintain our cyber security insurance policy that is in good standing with The Trust and operate according to data security best practices. As previously mentioned and when ransomware attacks are reported, a forensic audit is performed which may reveal additional information at the conclusion of that investigation.

For questions, please call Kate Glass in the Office of the Town Manager at (401) 268-1501.

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